

Proposed S. B. No. 586 – An Act Concerning a Collinsville
Hydro-electric Facility
Energy and Technology Committee – Public Hearing
February 10, 2009

Testimony of the Town of Canton:

The Town of Canton supports the intent of S.B. No. 586 an Act Concerning a Collinsville Hydro-electric Facility and offers the following comments and specific recommendations.

The Upper and Lower Collinsville Dams on the Farmington River were constructed by the Collins Company in the 1800's to first provide water power and converted in the 1930's to provide electricity. With the closure of the Collins Company in 1965 the facilities ultimately were acquired by the Hartford Electric Light Company who removed the generating facilities and ultimately transferred ownership of the dams and power facilities to the State of Connecticut in 1967.

Over the years both public and private attempts to re-institute the generating capacity have been proposed. The Town of Canton on behalf of Canton and its neighboring Towns of Avon and Burlington (the lower dam is actually in those communities) has proceeded to obtain authorization from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to re-establish the two facilities which can generate a total of 2 megawatts of electricity, enough to service 1200 to 1600 homes.

FERC on January 8, 2009 issued a preliminary license to the Town of Canton for this project. The Town has the support of Congressman Murphy who is introducing legislation which would congressionally require FERC to issue a final license. This action will shorten the licensing period by two to three years allowing construction to proceed within the next year.

The Town of Canton requests that legislation be enacted this session to:

- 1) Require that the Commissioner of Environmental Protection execute an agreement without any compensation to the State of Connecticut or additional costs to the towns of Canton, Avon and Burlington for use or liability to the Towns of Canton, Avon and Burlington that allows the Towns to (1) enter upon and conduct physical examinations and studies of the Upper and Lower Collinsville dams and associated structures, including but not limited to power houses and/or gate houses on the Farmington River for determining the feasibility of using the dams and associated structures for hydroelectric generations; (2) install, operate and maintain hydroelectric generating facilities and associated appurtenances including fish ladders at the dams and (3) exercise flow control of the water at the dams to maximize hydroelectric generation while maintaining minimum flows required by federal and state regulatory agencies.
- 2) Authorize in an amount up to ten million dollars to the Towns for the capitalization of the Collinsville Hydro-electric project.